(b) if so, whether Government are considering to amend the immigration rules for the semi-skilled;

(c) whether the new legislation will lay down service standards for recruiting agencies that carry out placement of Indian workers in various countries in the Gulf and other regions; and

(d) if so, whether proposed laws will have provisions to come down heavily on people smuggling and illegal trafficking, including recommending stringent penalties and setting up special courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Government is considering amendment of the Emigration Act, 1983 in order to provide for promotion of overseas employment, better protection of emigrant workers and stringent egulation of the recruiting agents including laying down service standards for them. It is proposed to include penal provisions against the offence of human smuggling. There is no proposal for setting up special courts. The amendments are under finalization.

Problem of Child Labour

1741. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are working on a mechanism to bring the Ministries concerned together on a common platform in a fresh attempt to address the problem of child labour in the country;

(b) whether the Planning Commission is agreeable for any extra funds for any such initiative; and

(c) whether the Ministry of Women and Child Development would be engaged in carrying out the projects aimed at eradicating the problems of child labour, effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Extra funds have not been sought from Planning Commission for effecting convergence with different Ministries to address the problem of child labour in the country.

(c) Ministry of Women and Child Development have been requested to provide necessary support in the rehabilitation of child labour covered under the National Child Labour Project Scheme of Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Violation of Labour Law by Industrial Units

1742. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the incident of fire on November 22, 2006 in a tannery factory at Topsia in Kolkata in which ten workers were burnt alive;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the factory was being run illegally and in violation of even the basic labour laws and rules;

(d) whether Government are aware of the substantial violation of laws relating to labourers by the owners of industrial units in various States, including West Bengal, as reflected by the above incident; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure adherence to labour laws in States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The State Government of West Bengal has informed that the fire occurred in a leather goods making unit named Tenex Exports situated at 33-C, Topsia Road, Kolkata-700039, P.S. Tiljola. It was not a tannery. Preliminary enquiry was made on 22.11.06 in the afternoon. Inquiry revealed that the said units was occupying the entire third/top floor measuring about 3000 sft. of a building in densely populated residential area. The building had only one staircase. Third floor occupied by the said unit was provided with two doorways (Collapsible gate) leading to common landing of the staircase. First and second floor of the building had been occupied by the other concerns. Reportedly at the time of fire both collapsible gates were under lock and key from the outside and one SK. Khalil in passession of the keys was sleeping inside. With the spread of the fire he woke up and while trying to open the lock one of the collapsible gates, unfortunately the key bunch fell outside the gate in such a position from where he could not pick them up. Ultimately neighbours could notice the fire and rushed to the third floor of the building and unlocked the collapsible